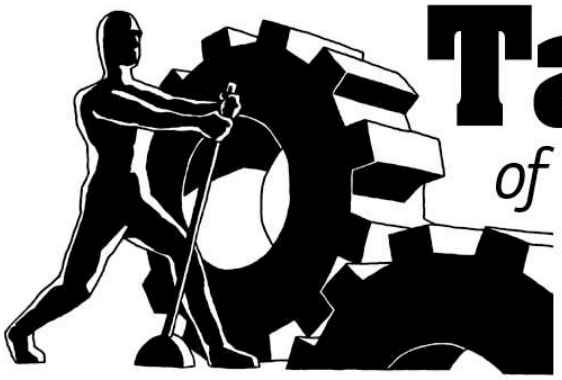

Take Control of Making Music with GarageBand

by Jeff Tolbert

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Read Me First

Welcome to *Take Control of Making Music with GarageBand,* version 3.0.

GarageBand is an exceptional way for musicians and nonmusicians alike to unleash their musical creativity. This ebook shows you how to use loops, assemble them into a composition, mix the song, and use basic audio effects in GarageBand version 3.0. Even if you have no musical ability or instruments, you can create an impressive song quickly and easily. (If you prefer to work with an earlier version of GarageBand, click the Check for Updates button on the cover to downgrade to the 1.0 or 2.0 version of this ebook.) This ebook was written by Jeff Tolbert, edited by Caroline Rose, and published by TidBITS Electronic Publishing.

To get in touch or learn more about the Take Control ebooks, you can:

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The price of this ebook is $10. If you want to share it with a friend, please do so as you would with a physical book, meaning that if your friend uses it regularly, your friend should buy a copy. The “Help a Friend Take Control!” button on the cover makes it easy for you to give your friend a discount coupon.

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Onscreen Reading Tips

We carefully designed the Take Control ebooks to be read onscreen, and although most of what you need to know is obvious, note the following for the best possible onscreen reading experience:

- Blue text indicates links. You can click any item in the Table of Contents to jump to that section. Cross-references are also links, as are URLs and email addresses.
- Work with the Bookmarks tab or drawer showing so that you can always jump to any main topic by clicking its bookmark.
- In Adobe Acrobat Pro version 6 or 7, set your preferences to view Web URLs in a Web browser: choose Acrobat > Preferences, switch to the Web Capture pane, and choose In Web Browser from the Open Web Links pop-up menu.

NOTE Listen as you learn! I occasionally give an audio example by linking to a song in the iTunes Music Store. You can click the link to connect to the Music Store and then double-click the song in the album list to play a 30-second preview of it.

- The Glossary defines a number of GarageBand-related terms, which also appear in the text of the ebook in blue italic formatting. You can click a blue italic term to move to the Glossary page that defines it; you can then return from the Glossary to where you were reading by using a menu command or keyboard shortcut, as noted in **Table 1**.

Table 1: How to Navigate Quickly to a Previous Point in This Ebook

Viewing Software	Menu Command	Keyboard Shortcut
Adobe Acrobat 6	View > Go To > Previous View	Command-Left arrow
Adobe Acrobat 5	Document > Go To > Previous View	Command-Left arrow
Preview	Go > Back	Command-[

- Find more tips in the Take Control FAQ on the Web.

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Printing Tips

Although our layout is aimed at making online reading an enjoyable experience, we've made sure that printing remains a reasonable option. Please review these tips before you print:

- Use the Check for Updates button on the cover to make sure you have the latest version of the ebook and to verify that we don't plan to release a new version shortly. If you want to commit this ebook to paper, it makes sense to print the latest possible version.
- Don't throw out your PDF after you print! You must click the Check for Updates button on the cover to get future updates. The link *must* be accessed from the cover of your PDF.
- For a tighter layout that uses fewer pages, check your printer options for a 2-up feature that prints two pages on one piece of paper. For instance, your Print dialog may have an unlabeled pop-up menu that offers a Layout option; choose Layout, and then choose 2 from the Pages per Sheet pop-up menu. You may also wish to choose Single Hairline from the Border menu.
- When printing on a color inkjet printer, to avoid using a lot of color ink (primarily on the yellow boxes we use for tips and figures), look for an option to print entirely in black-and-white.
- In the unlikely event that Adobe Acrobat or Adobe Reader cannot successfully print this PDF, try Preview; several readers have solved printing problems by using Preview.

Basics

In reading this ebook, you may get stuck if you don't understand Take Control syntax for things like working with menus or finding items in the Finder. Please note the following:

- **Menus:** Where I describe choosing a command from a menu in the menu bar, I use an abbreviated description. For example, the abbreviated description for the menu command that deletes a track from a song in GarageBand is "Track > Delete Track."
- **Path syntax:** I occasionally use a *path* to show the location of a file or folder in your file system. Path text is formatted in bold type. For example, Tiger stores most utilities, such as Calculator, in the Utilities folder. The path to Calculator is

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`/Applications/Utilities/Calculator`. The slash at the start of the path tells you to start from the root level of the disk.

- **GarageBand's Preferences:** I often refer to preferences in GarageBand that you may want to adjust. To display GarageBand's preferences (not to be confused with the systemwide settings found in the System Preferences application), choose GarageBand > Preferences (Command-,). Within the Preferences window, click a button at the top to display a pane with that category of preferences (for example, the Audio/MIDI button). Instead of giving detailed directions each time, I sometimes use an abbreviated notation such as "go to the Audio/MIDI preference pane."

What's New in Version 3.0

I updated this ebook to cover new features in Apple's recent upgrade to the program, GarageBand 3.0, as follows:

- I updated the Preferences instructions to reflect the addition of a Loops pane. I also added a tip about changing the default iTunes playlist, composer name, and album name. See Configure GarageBand.
- The Track Info window is now integrated into the main Garage-Band window and so is called the Track Info pane. I changed this throughout the ebook.
- **Figure 28** shows the new Podcast Sounds View button.
- In Add a sound effect, I show how you can incorporate the new podcast sound effects into your songs.
- Use Loops from Other Sources discusses the new iLife Media Browser, which lets you easily import songs, photos, and movies into GarageBand.
- Force a Loop to Keep Its Original Tempo shows you how to keep a loop at its recorded tempo rather than synchronize with the current project. I also describe a method for playing a loop at a tempo different from both the current song and its original tempo.
- Finally, I updated many of the screenshots to reflect GarageBand's new interface changes.

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Introduction

GarageBand makes it easy for someone who isn't a professional musician to create music that sounds professional. It's inexpensive, and because it was developed by Apple, it's pretty to look at. The program does provide online Help but it doesn't go into great detail, and unfortunately some aspects of the software are unclear or downright inscrutable. Even if you have some familiarity with other music editing software, the tips and tricks in this ebook will help streamline how you work in GarageBand.

This ebook shows you how to create a song in GarageBand using the *loops* that ship with the product. You'll learn tricks for customizing the built-in loops and ways to use mixing techniques and audio *effects* so that your songs will sound unique. Whether you're new to GarageBand or have already played around with it, plenty of audio-related goodies await you within. I won't, however, cover recording a guitar or vocals or setting up a MIDI keyboard; I cover those topics in my second ebook, *Take Control of Recording with GarageBand* (http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/garageband-recording.html).

I'm also passing along some of the musical knowledge I've amassed over the years, to help you create an interesting and effective composition. This information is oriented toward nonmusicians, so don't worry if all you know about music is that a grand piano is bigger than a ukulele; I've presented the concepts in plain English. You don't need to know what a diminished seventh chord is or how to sight-read an orchestral score to make a song that will impress your friends. If any of the terminology stumps you, you can click specially formatted terms to move to where they're defined in the Glossary.

Take Control of Making Music with GarageBand follows a step-by-step approach. I walk you through the creation of two songs: one simple and one more complex. I point out exactly which loops, effects, and settings to use where. This specific, sequential approach keeps the ebook from being a dull and dry reference manual. I suggest that you follow the instructions as closely as you can. After you've worked through a song, it's yours to play with. Fly, be free, create! GarageBand is a tool to unleash your inner genius. I hope this ebook helps you to do just that.

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Making Music with GarageBand Quick Start

This ebook shows you how to create exciting songs quickly and easily using the music loops that come with GarageBand. Even if you know nothing at all about writing music, you will learn the process of putting together, editing, and exporting a song. Here's an overview:

Set up:

- Update GarageBand if necessary and set preferences so that it will run at its best; see Configure GarageBand.

Make your first tune:

- New to GarageBand? Make your first song in no time! Learn what a loop is and how to work with it; see Add Loops.
- Tweak your tune, make the loops work together, and give the song an ending; see Learn Editing and Mixing Basics.

Make a great song:

- It's time to start making great music. Decide on your goal and find loops that help meet that goal; see Plan the Song.
- Understand what it takes to make your composition interesting and exciting; see Consider the Elements That Make a Song Work.
- Crop some loops and expand others, change instruments, and move notes around, using both notation view and graphic view; see Work with Regions and Loops.

Edit the song:

- Explore the basics of audio editing and effects—fades, equalization, panning and more; see Mix Your Song.

Experiment with advanced loop techniques:

- Create a drum break, add chord changes to loops, import MIDI files and loops from other sources, and more; see Learn More Loop Techniques.

Finish your song:

- Export your song to iTunes and turn it into an MP3 so you can share it with your friends; see Export Your Song.

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Configure GarageBand

I wrote this ebook as a series of tutorials for you to follow. GarageBand's default configuration gets in the way of smooth workflow in a few places in these tutorials, so make sure you have the latest version of the program and adjust your preferences now, in order to streamline your work later in the ebook and minimize confusing dialogs and system slowdowns.

Upgrade to the Latest Version

If you haven't done so already, the first thing I recommend is to upgrade to GarageBand version 3.0, the most recent version at the time of this writing. I assume that everyone reading this ebook is using this version, although I point out some of the differences between 2.0 and 3.0 so that users of the earlier version won't be left totally in the dust.

To see which version you have, launch GarageBand and choose GarageBand > About GarageBand. Up pops a window with a beautiful picture of an electric guitar, some copyright information, and the version number. To find out if a newer version is available, switch to the Finder and choose Software Update from the Apple menu.

Tip It's a good idea to keep your copy of GarageBand 2.0 intact "just in case." If you have the spare hard disk space, do the following before you update iLife:

1. Rename your old GarageBand application file **GarageBand 2.0**.
2. Rename the GarageBand folder in **Library/Application Support/**. I suggest giving it a name that is similar and clear, such as **GarageBand 2.0**.

If you have any of the Jam Packs installed, you must either reinstall them after you update or manually move all the Jam Pack loops and instruments into the new GarageBand folder (carefully moving the instruments over in small batches to prevent overwriting any newer GarageBand 3.0 loops that have the same name).

Tip You should also check for updates to this ebook; click the Check for Updates button on the cover to find out if a new version is available or planned for the near future.

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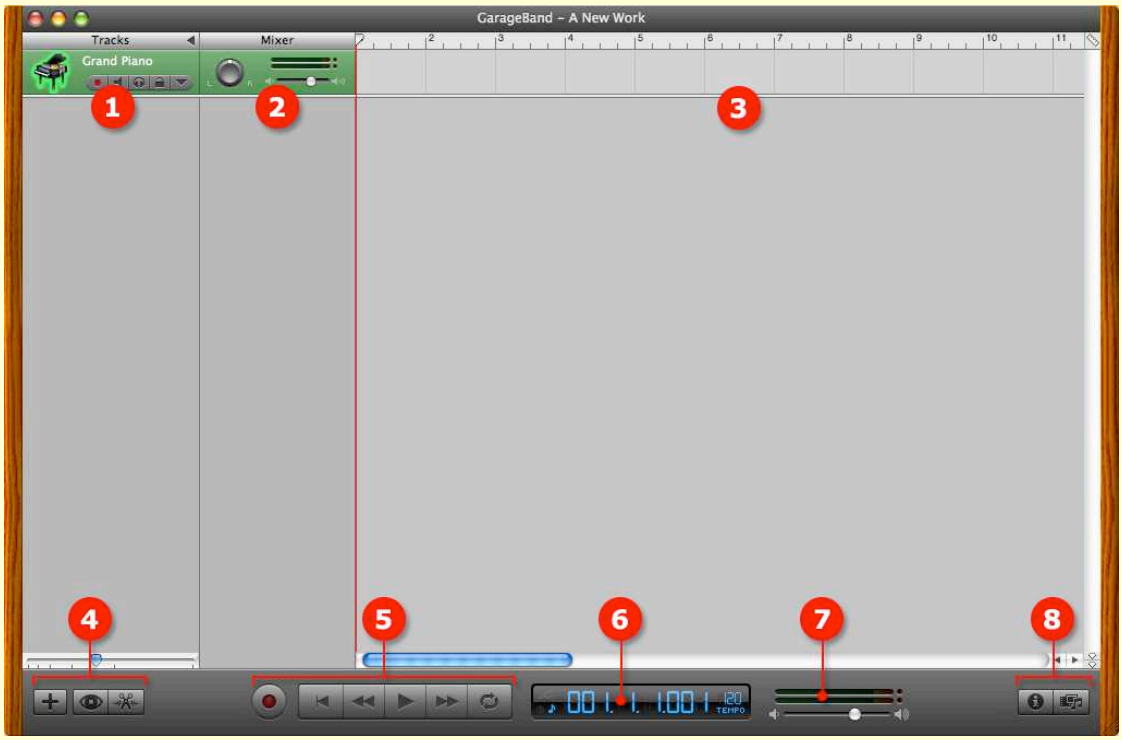
Make Your First Tune

Now that you've followed the recommendations in the previous section for optimizing your GarageBand experience, you can get acquainted with the basics of the program and start creating your first song. If you've already mucked around in GarageBand a bit on your own, it might be tempting to skip to the more involved song later in this ebook, but I'd recommend against that. The ditty you'll work on in this section may be simple, but it will cover a lot of territory. You may also find it enlightening to watch how someone else works.

Get Acquainted with the Interface

The GarageBand interface, as beautiful as it is, can be daunting to the uninitiated. **Figure 2** highlights elements of the GarageBand interface that I cover briefly in this section. I leave out the details about most of these elements until you're actually going to use them.

Figure 2



GarageBand Interface: 1. Track header; 2. Track mixer; 3. Timeline; 4. Add Track, Loop Browser, and Track Editor buttons; 5. Transport controls; 6. Time display; 7. Master volume slider and level meters; 8. Track Info and Media Browser buttons.

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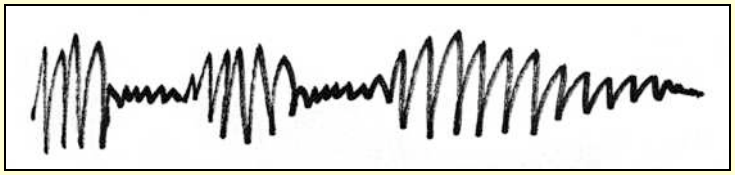
Make a Great Song

You've created a simple tune that has a beat and something of a melody, but it doesn't really go anywhere, nor does it last long. The next song you're going to work on will be more structured.

Plan the Song

When you start a song, it helps to consider your goal. Are you creating a soundtrack to your latest iMovie project? Intro music for a podcast? Background music for an iPhoto slideshow? Think about the mood or the effect you're trying to achieve. The clearer you are about your goal the smoother the process will be. You might want to make a little drawing of what you want your song to "look" like. Maybe you want it to start with a bang, then alternate between quiet sections and loud sections, and end with a longer loud part that fades out at the end (**Figure 15**). Or maybe it should start quietly and build slowly until the end. It's your call. GarageBand comes with a ton of loops, so you should be able to find something that fits your goal.

Figure 15



Song Sketch: This particular song has alternating loud and soft sections and a fade-out at the end.

With your last song still open, start collecting loops for the next project:

1. Browse through the loops, and look for Deep Electric Piano 01, 02, and 05.
2. For each of the aforementioned piano loops, check the box in the Fav column—meaning "Favorite"—on the far right in the browser's results list (**Figure 16**). You may need to scroll to the right to see the Fav column.

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Learn More Loop Techniques

Now that you've created a couple of tunes and learned a lot about how GarageBand works, here are a few more advanced tricks for those of you who want to take your loop work a little further.

> **Note** Save your song and create a new GarageBand project to try out these advanced techniques. They're easier to follow if you work on a fresh song file.

Create a Drum Break

GarageBand ships with an excellent set of drum loops, but using the same beat over and over again can get monotonous. It helps to throw in some fills to break up the repetition. Unfortunately, the basic GarageBand drum loops don't come with many fills or breaks. You could buy Jam Pack 3: Rhythm Section from Apple (http://www.apple.com/ilife/garageband/jampacks/) or a set of third-party loop sets like Bandmates (http://bandmateloops.com/) or Drums on Demand (http://www.drumsondemand.com/apple), but you can also make fills yourself. Here's how:

1. Find a beat you like. In this case, I'm using Effected Drum Kit 02.
2. Drag it up to the timeline to create a new drum track.
3. Duplicate the drum track by choosing Track > Duplicate Track (Command-D).
4. Copy the drum region into the new track by copying and pasting or Option-dragging the region. The beginning of the new region should line up with the end of the existing one.

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Export Your Song

The final step for any song is to export it so that you can listen to it in iTunes or burn it to a CD. There isn't much to this step: simply choose Share > Send Song to iTunes, and GarageBand starts turning your song into an *AIFF* file.

You might be wondering, why AIFF (which, unlike *MP3* and AAC, is uncompressed)? GarageBand's export feature applies no compression to the audio output, so the exported file contains all the data of your original track in as pristine a form as possible. MP3 and AAC formats use varying degrees of audio compression, which throws away some of your original audio data. You'll most likely never notice what's missing, but technically these formats don't retain all the quality of the original audio. Once you have an AIFF file, however, you can easily convert it to an MP3 or AAC file in iTunes.

Tip If you want to change the name of your song at this point, you can do one of two things:

- Before you export, choose File > Save As and save the file with a new name.
- Rename the exported song once it's in iTunes: select the song, press Enter to make the title editable, and then type a new title.

When GarageBand finishes processing the song, iTunes launches and shows you your song. If your song doesn't appear in the iTunes window, select Library and sort by date added. (You may need to Control-click the column headers in iTunes and activate the Date Added column.) Your song should be the last in the list.

In iTunes, to convert your song to MP3 (or AAC if you prefer), choose Advanced > Convert Selection to MP3. You can change the format you're converting to in the Importing pane of the iTunes Preferences.

Tip If you ever want to find the original AIFF file that GarageBand created, Control-click the song title in iTunes and choose Show Song File; iTunes will open the folder that contains the original AIFF file. All your other GarageBand songs should be in there as well.

That's it, you're done; congratulations! Now go create a masterpiece.

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Learn More

For additional information, consult these Web sites and books.

Web Sites

Apple's GarageBand Discussion Board: One of the best sources for GarageBand information, tips, and answers. The archives are extensive and extremely useful. I learned a lot from the forum when I started using GarageBand. No question is too tricky, too unusual, or too stupid, and users are for the most part helpful and courteous.
http://discussions.apple.com/forum.jspa?forumID=1120

Apple's GarageBand Accessories Guide: A list of GarageBand accessories available directly from Apple.
http://www.apple.com/ilife/garageband/accessories.html

MacJams.com: One of several sites where GarageBanders can post songs and share tips and tricks. They have forums, articles, a buyer's guide, and a resource library, but their main strength is the huge library of user-contributed songs.
http://www.macjams.com/

MacIDOL.com: Another place to hear unique GarageBand compositions. Songs are rated by total number of plays, so popular songs rise to the top. See if you can be number 1!
http://www.macidol.com/

iCompositions.com: Another site for sharing tunes.
http://www.icompositions.com/

Soundtrack Lounge: Technically a site for Soundtrack, GarageBand's cousin designed for scoring films. There are forums for both applications, and users can share songs as well.
http://www.soundtracklounge.com/

Books

GarageBand for Mac OS X: Visual QuickStart Guide
by Victor Gavenda, published by Peachpit Press
If this ebook whetted your appetite for even more information about every musician's favorite new toy, the *Visual QuickStart Guide* is a great reference to turn to next.

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Appendix A: Improving Performance

It's not uncommon for GarageBand to stop in the middle of playback and greet you with confusing messages like "System Overload" or "Disk Is Too Slow." If this happens to you, here are some suggestions:

- **Quit all other programs:** Especially quit programs that perform background tasks such as checking for email. GarageBand is greedy; it wants *all* your computer's attention.
- **Turn off FileVault:** If you use Apple's FileVault to encrypt your data, either turn it off or store your song files outside your Home folder. Remember that the Documents and Music folders are in the Home folder, and GarageBand automatically stores song files in the Music folder.
- **Lock your tracks:** Locking tracks, especially software instrument tracks, greatly reduces the processor drain. When you lock a track, GarageBand renders it to disk, meaning that instead of having to generate instrument sounds and effects on the fly, the program only has to do is play the rendered track. It's much easier for your poor little overworked processor. If I see the dreaded red playhead or get system overload messages, I can make the problem go away by locking a couple of tracks.

Note Software Instruments (the green tracks) are particularly CPU-hungry. The computer synthesizes the sound on the fly, using software algorithms for the timbre of the instrument and MIDI data for the actual notes played. In Real Instrument tracks, on the other hand, all the computer has to do is play back previously recorded audio—a much easier task.

To lock a track, click the Lock Track button in the track's header. The next time you hit Play, GarageBand makes you wait while it renders the newly locked track (or tracks) to disk, and then it plays the song normally. Note that after you lock a track, you can still change its volume and panning, but to make other changes you must unlock it first.

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GLOSSARY

AIFF (Audio Interchange File Format): A sound file format developed by Apple. Most Macintosh audio software can handle the AIFF format, and GarageBand exports files in AIFF format. Expect a GarageBand-exported AIFF file to consume about 10 MB of disk space per minute of song. *See MP3*.

bass: The low frequencies of human hearing. *See midrange, treble*.

chord: Any combination of two or more tones sounded simultaneously. *See harmony*.

clipping: Digital distortion caused when output levels are set too high. Every track, as well as the master output levels, has clipping indicators: red dots that light up when your output goes "into the red." Clipping is bad, even if you think you can't hear it.

consonant: A chord or interval that is stable and pleasing to the ear. *See dissonant*.

dissonant: Any chord or interval that sounds unstable, tense, or harsh. Combining two loops in different keys sometimes results in dissonance. *See consonant*.

dynamics: Variations in volume in a piece of music.

effects: Any sound-altering device that's added in the Details section of the Track Info pane. These include reverb, echo, and EQ. *See EQ, reverb*.

EQ (equalization): A set of filters that lets you balance the bass, midrange, and treble frequencies of a track. It also includes the bass reduction and treble reduction filters, which cut all frequencies above or below a certain adjustable cutoff point.

half step: The smallest interval commonly used in Western music; the distance between a black key and the adjacent white keys on the piano (or the distance between two adjacent white keys if there is no black key in between). *See interval*.

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harmony: The vertical dimension of music; the interaction of notes sounded simultaneously to produce chords. Harmony also refers to the progression of chords over the course of a piece of music. *See chord.*

high-hat: A pair of cymbals, one face up and the other face down on a stand, arranged so that the drummer can control the space between them using a pedal.

interval: The vertical distance between two pitches. The interval between a white key on the piano and the adjacent black key is called a half step.

key: A selection of tones that gravitates toward a root note, or tonic. A song in the key of C is based on the notes of the C scale (all the white keys on the piano) and naturally gravitates toward C. Keys are commonly divided into major keys, which generally sound happy, and minor keys, which sound more melancholy. *See root, scale.*

level: The volume or loudness of an audio signal.

loop: A short segment of music that can be repeated seamlessly over time. GarageBand ships with over 1000 professionally produced loops. *See region.*

measure: A rhythmic unit of organization. Most popular songs have four beats per measure, and in general the snare drum accents the second and fourth beats of the measure (the backbeats).

melody: A series of notes with a pleasing and recognizable shape. In general, the most effective melodies are relatively simple and are easy to hum.

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface): A digital language used to connect synthesizers, computers, and other electronic instruments. MIDI information includes details about the note played, its velocity (or volume), and any vibrato or pitch bending that was applied.

midrange: The frequencies between the bass and the treble frequencies. *See bass, treble.*

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mix: The full output when all your tracks are blended together; the end result after you've finished recording, looping, editing, and mixing your song.

mixing: Adjusting the individual track volumes, panning, and effects to make parts of a song fit together harmoniously and effectively.

MP3: A compressed audio format. Much smaller than the AIFF format, it typically requires about 1 MB of disk space per minute of song. *See AIFF.*

Mute: A button that lets you temporarily disable a track.

note: Any single pitch or tone produced by a musical instrument.

octave: The most stable interval in Western music. An octave is the distance between two adjacent notes with the same name. These two notes sound like the same note, only higher or lower versions of each other. *See interval.*

pan knob: A knob that lets you control the apparent position of a track between the left and right speakers.

region: A contiguous segment of recorded music in a GarageBand track. A cropped segment of a loop is a region, as is a loop that repeats 20 times. *See loop.*

reverb: An effect that simulates an acoustical environment, such as a small room or a large arena. *See effect.*

rhythm: The beat or pulse of a piece of music, including accented notes, measures, and all other aspects of musical time.

root: The dominant note in a chord or scale; the note from which a chord or scale seems to originate. Also called the *tonic. See chord, scale.*

sample: A recorded sound or musical note. Typically, samples are "mapped" to the keys on a keyboard, so they can be played like a piano or a synthesizer. A set of samples of a trombone, for example, could be played on a MIDI keyboard, and the performance would sound as if an actual trombone were playing the notes. *See MIDI.*

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scale: A series of notes progressing up or down in a stepwise fashion. The most common used in Western music are the major and minor scales. *See key*.

snare drum: A drum fitted with wires, or snares, on the bottom that produce a crisp, rattling effect when the drum is struck.

Solo: A button that lets you listen to an individual track by itself. This is useful for adjusting effects and EQ on a particular track.

tempo: The speed at which a piece of music is performed. Ballads have a slow tempo, whereas high-energy dance music often has a fast tempo.

texture: The interaction of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements within a piece of music. A solo cello holding long notes is one kind of texture. A jazz band playing complex rhythms and harmonies while a saxophone takes a solo is another, completely different kind of texture.

timbre: Tone color. A violin can produce certain musical timbres, whereas those produced by a piano are quite different. An electric guitar can produce lots of different timbres, depending on many factors (including the amplifier, the volume of the sound, and whether effects are being used).

tonic: The dominant note in a chord or scale; the note from which a chord or scale seems to originate. Also called the *root*. *See scale, chord*.

track: In GarageBand, each track usually carries a separate musical instrument. Each track is independent, and you can adjust its volume, pan, and effects without affecting other tracks in the song.

treble: The highest frequencies of human hearing. *See bass, midrange*.

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About This Ebook

In contrast to traditional print books, Take Control ebooks offer clickable links, full-text searching, and free minor updates. We hope you find them both useful and enjoyable to read.

About the Author

Jeff Tolbert is a musician, painter, and graphic designer living in Seattle. He plays bass and guitar and is becoming passable at keyboards. He has played in numerous bands over the years, including What Fell?, the Goat-Footed Senators, the diary of Anne Frank String Quartet, 80 Bones, the Fire-proof Beauties, and James Howard & the Transformers. He is currently playing bass with Tiger Zane.

When GarageBand came out, Jeff got so excited about making music on his iBook that he went out and spent close to $1000 on music equipment and software. He now routinely stays up until the wee hours creating songs and textures to amuse and irritate himself and his friends. http://www.jefftolbert.com/

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Shameless Plug

If you don't have it already, be sure to get a copy of *Take Control of Recording with GarageBand,* my second ebook in the Take Control series. It covers using GarageBand to record vocals, drums, guitars, MIDI keyboards, and all kinds of other instruments.
http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/garageband-recording.html

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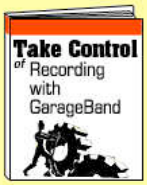

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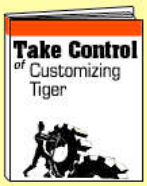

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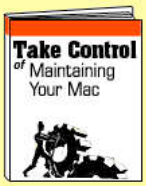

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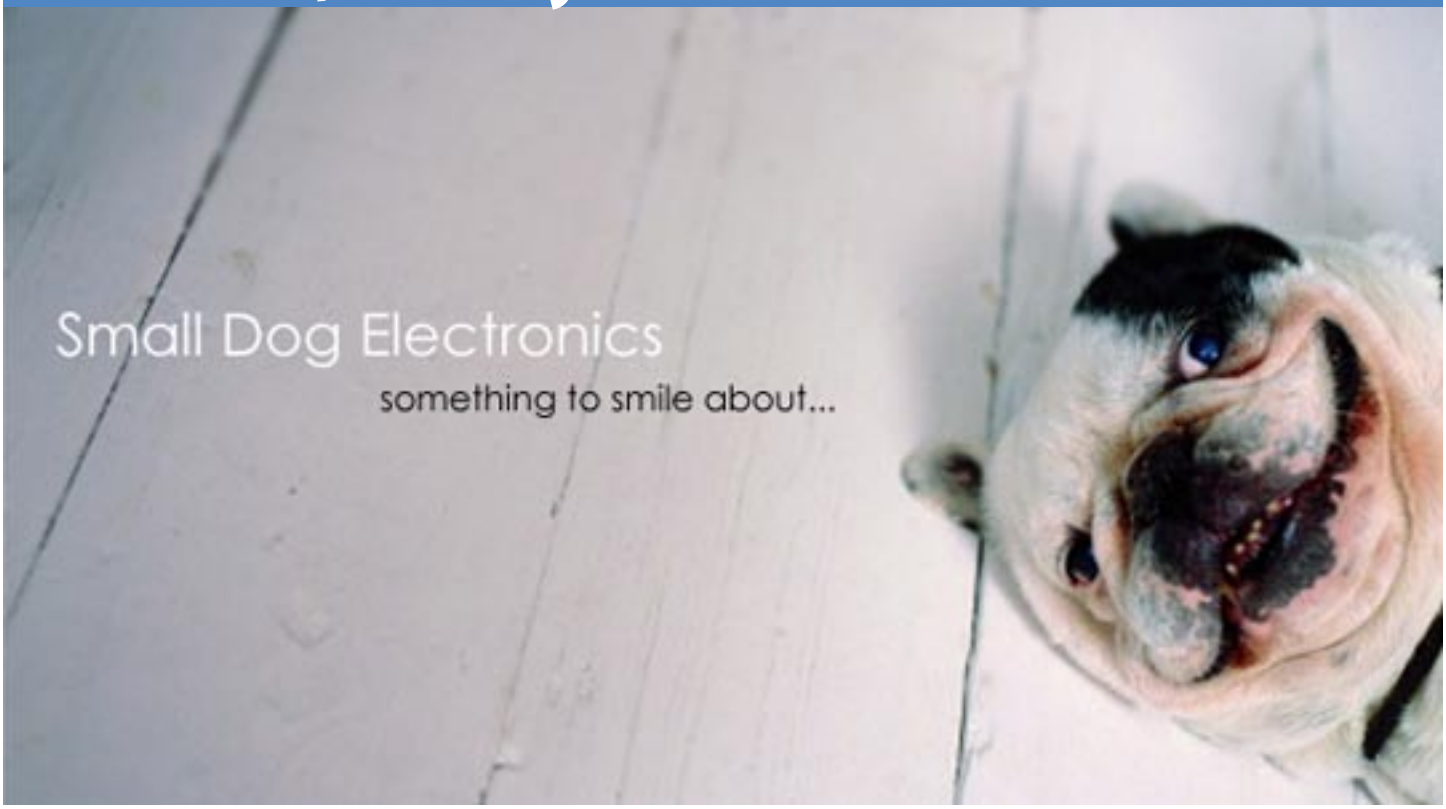

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